

## EDITOR'S PAGE



## Editor's Page: The Passing of a Legend

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Simon Dack, MD, the founding editor of *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, passed away on February 7, 1994, at the age of 85. Up until a few days before his death, he continued to handle manuscripts as a Guest Editor for JACC. So that the current editors from the University of California, San Francisco, could avoid any potential conflict of interest, Dr. Dack completely managed all manuscript submissions that were directly or even remotely connected with UCSF. This he did with as much directness as he had for 35 years as the Editor-in-Chief of first the *American Journal of Cardiology* and second the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. When I took over the Journal as Editor-in-Chief about two years ago, I had the opportunity to spend a day with him to try and condense his experience of 35 years into some hastily scribbled notes on my note pad. He reminisced about many of the valuable lessons he had learned and provided me with some unique insights. Most important, he greatly encouraged me and at the end said, "Be sure and do it your way." He certainly did it "his way" and will always be remembered as one of America's longest and best journal editors. In this issue, Dr. Leslie Kohn, who served as one of his Associate Editors, has written a moving tribute to him. Dr. Dack was honored at the annual convocation of the College in March, where Dr. Charles Fisch wrote a fitting tribute to him, as detailed in the convocation program. I concur with these sentiments in paying tribute to him and his wife Jackie. He will be sorely missed. I will no longer be able to discuss a "knotty" editorial problem with him over the phone and receive his direct and wise counsel.

As I look back over the many times we exchanged thoughts over the years, one time stands out vividly in my mind. When I was invited to come to Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City as a Visiting Professor several years ago, I was warned that I would have to appear at Dr. Dack's conference, which was described as an unmerciful

grilling of the poor unsuspecting visitor. It was with some trepidation, therefore, that I appeared in the lecture hall at the appointed time. Simon and I stood at two different lecterns at the front, and he began to ask me questions about the management of "heart failure." They were blunt, tough questions delivered as one might throw a repeated left jab in the boxing ring. My nervousness disappeared, however, and my enthusiasm for this discussion quickened, because we were talking about the kind of tough questions that needed discussion. These included questions about the importance of quality of life compared with length of life and, Do inotropic agents really have a role in treating heart failure? This discussion loomed particularly prominent in my memory as I realized that over the past few months Simon was wrestling with these same issues in his own losing battle with severe heart failure. The conference had been a preview of his own life—and death. Dr. Dack was buried with a copy of the Journal and a red pencil, symbolic of all the personal effort he expended in making every article better with the liberal use of his corrective red pencil. If there is a *Journal of Celestial Medicine*, I suspect that Simon is making it better.

With Dr. Dack's passing, we will now send any UCSF-related manuscripts to Dr. Francis Klocke who is currently a Senior Assistant Editor at JACC. We appreciate his willingness to take on this important editorial responsibility for JACC. We know that he will follow the example of excellence established by our founding editor, Simon Dack.

*At the funeral service for Dr. Simon Dack, the following remarks were delivered by William D. Nelligan, former Executive Vice President of the College, and by Dr. Valentin Fuster, of the Cardiovascular Institute at Mount Sinai Medical Center.*

This was a man who cast a huge imprint of worthwhile deeds during his lifetime. This was a man who was tremendously respected by all who worked with and for him. This was a

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